

## Why Visit the Dentist?

- Every child deserves a healthy start in life!
- Dental health is an important part of overall health!
- Dental problems can begin early in life - as soon as the first tooth comes in. It is much easier to prevent dental disease than to treat it!
- 1 in 4 elementary school age children have tooth decay!



My Dentist's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

My Dentist's Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

My Dentist's Address: \_\_\_\_\_

If you need help finding a  
Dentist who accepts Denti-cal,  
Call Denti-cal Beneficiary  
Customer Service at:  
**1-800-322-6384**

If you live in Los Angeles or  
Sacramento County and you  
are having trouble with your  
Dental Plan, or getting through  
to your Dental Plan Please Call,  
The Department of Managed  
Health care at:  
**1-888-466-2219**

If you live in Los Angeles or  
Sacramento County and you Do  
not know what Dental Plan you  
are in or would like to Change  
Dental Plans Please Call  
Health care options at:  
**1-800-430-4263**



**Dental Health  
Begins  
with Your Child's  
First Tooth**

Department of  
Health Care Services 

## When Should Your Child See the Dentist?

### Age 0–1 year

#### When?

You should make an appointment for your Child's first dental visit as soon as their first tooth comes in or by their first birthday, whichever comes first. See the back of this brochure for help finding a dentist in your plan.



#### Why?

Cavities can start as soon as the first tooth comes in, so it's important to have your child's first dental visit as soon as possible. At the first visit ask how to brush your child's teeth, and talk to your dentist about fluoride and how you can help prevent cavities.

### Age 2+ years

#### When?

Every six months, or as recommended by your child's dentist.

#### Why?

By the time kids are in kindergarten, 50% already have dental problems. Regular dental visits can help catch early signs of cavities

and stop new cavities from forming.



## How Can Parents Help?

### Age 0–1 year

#### How Can you help?

If you give your baby a bottle at bedtime, only give water in the bottle -no milk, formula, juice, or sweet drinks. Gently wipe your baby's gums with a washcloth until the first tooth arrives - then switch to a soft toothbrush.

### Age 1–2 years

#### How Can you help?

Brush your child's teeth in the morning and before bed with a tiny dab of fluoride toothpaste. Look closely for any signs of early cavities (chalky white-brown areas on teeth near gums). Ask your medical doctor to apply fluoride varnish to your child's teeth at well-child checkups. Your child should now be drinking from a cup, not a bottle. Give milk or juice only at mealtimes and give water in between.

### Age 3–4 years

#### How Can you help?

Continue brushing your child's teeth every morning and before bed with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. Children under 7-8 years old can't do a good job without your help, but let them practice after you have done your part. Limit sugary drinks (sodas, flavored milks and fruit drinks) and sugary foods every day.

### At any age

#### How Can you help?

You, the parent can help prevent cavities. Ask your medical doctor to apply fluoride varnish to your child's teeth at well-child checkup visits. Don't share toothbrushes. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Your doctor and dentist are there to help.

### More Helpful Tips:

- ✓ Select healthier treats. Avoid giving your child treats that are sour (high in acidity, which erodes tooth enamel), sticky or chewy (leaves sugars directly on the teeth for prolonged periods).
- ✓ Prevent bad habits. Thumb-sucking and pacifiers after age two can create crowded, crooked teeth or bite problems.
- ✓ Help a young child brush at night. This is the most important time to brush due to higher risk to cavities and plaque.
- ✓ The best way to teach a child about the importance of oral care is to lead by your good example. floss once a day.